great and until the last century the means of navigation remained so crude, that water-borne foreign trade was not extensive.

Through all the centuries, however, while ideas filtered in from the outside world, and occasionally political conditions made possible a somewhat extensive intercourse, the Chinese, compared with most other civilized peoples, have been isolated.

Isolation probably contributed toward the formation of a number of the familiar characteristics of the Chinese. To it may partly be ascribed their intense national pride. All other civilizations with which the Chinese had close contacts were derived from themselves and, they thought, were inferior to theirs. They were the source of the culture of most of their neighbors, but although they repeatedly profited by contributions from abroad, with the exception of Buddhism they thought of themselves as having received but little. Theirs was the Middle Kingdom and all other peoples were barbarous. Even when conquered, they gave their culture to their rulers 3[n](* eventually either absorbed them or drove them out. Their land was large, and during most of their recorded history was under one administration. So far as they knew, except for reports, often vague, of other lands to the west, theirs was the mightiest realm on earth. Their experience with peoples on their borders and especially with other invaders helps to account for the fact that when Western nations forced their way into the country the Chinese long regarded them _as_ simply a newgroup of barbarians and^ while willing to learn a few details Trom^them; for many "years did not dream that the entire structure of Chinese culture Vould need to be recast. Lack of intimate relations with other great civilized states,

too, helped to breed in the Chinese a reluctance to regard themselves as one of a family of nations or to treat with Occidental powers on the basis of equality. This hereditary attitude of superiority has been outraged by the encroachments of foreigners in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and may account in part for the intense impatience with treaties derogatory to Chinese sovereignty.

So far we have had little to say of the effect of the ocean. However, this has been quite as important as that of the land boundaries. The sea, as we have seen, is the source of the moisture-laden winds that bring China's rains. Until the last century, moreover, the ocean was even more effective in isolating